RESPONSE REPORT

SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL TRANSITIONS

NEW CHALLENGES: NEW DIRECTIONS

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Prince Edward Island
Department of Education

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Prince Edward Island
CANADA

Department of Education

16 Fitzroy Street
PO Box 2000
Charlottetown
Prince Edward Island
Canada C1A 7N8

Tel 902 368 4600
Fax 902 368 4622
http://www.gov.pe.ca/educ/

Île-du-Prince-Édouard
CANADA

Ministère de l'Éducation

16, rue Fitzroy
C.P. 2000
Charlottetown
Île-du-Prince-Édouard
Canada C1A 7N8

Tél. : 902 368 4600
Téléc. : 902 368 4622
http://www.gov.pe.ca/educ/

Minister's Response to
The Report of the Senior High School Transitions Advisory Committee

It is with enthusiastic support that I accept the Response Report from the Senior High Transitions Advisory Committee. This report presents an exciting response and action plan for the Transitions initiative and provides consensus direction for the initiatives first outlined in the "Senior High School Transitions New Challenges: New Directions Program Proposal".

Many people invested a great deal of time, energy and input in order to develop directions for this initiative. The development phase for the various initiatives outlined in this report is now at a starting point and it is anticipated that development, field testing and piloting of several of the proposed courses and initiatives will soon proceed.

The Response Report stresses many important concepts. It advocates a collegial developmental model where courses, programs, or offerings are developed in partnership with teachers and other key stakeholders. Thus, the report calls for a great deal of committee work in order to insure that expert input is obtained for each undertaking.

The need to build upon the many positive practices presently in place in our schools is both logical and reassuring for those who have been carrying out many of these tasks with limited recognition and resources. The need for additional resources will be a challenge, however, the advice of "... proceed cautiously and do it right" seems to be well founded. As the report indicates, not everything can be carried out at once and I commend the Advisory Committee for establishing and recommending the initial priorities.

We are all now challenged by the need to work together as partners in order to achieve an education for our students that is meaningful, challenging and that opens doors to their future pursuits, whatever they may be.

I sincerely thank everyone who provided input and feedback for this undertaking and especially to the 23 members of the Advisory Committee for their dedication and insights into the issues under their review.

We have made a great start, however much remains to be done. Knowing that all partners involved have the welfare of the students as their priority, I am confident that we can achieve a great deal by working together on this important undertaking.

Chester Gillan, Minister of Education

June 9, 1999

Table of Contents

Background 1

General Observations 3

Recommendations 5
- Accepted as Stated 6
- Accepted with Modification 8
- Table for Further Study 18
- Not Accepted 21

Additional Observations on the Original Recommendations 23

New Recommendations 24

Priorities 29

Committee Members 30

Report of Advisory Committee
Senior High School Transitions
New Challenges: New Directions
Program Proposal

Background

Following the printing of the Senior High School Transitions New Challenges: New Directions Program Proposal, a comprehensive distribution and information sharing process was undertaken. An initial meeting was held with school board chairpersons, superintendents, directors, representatives of P.E.I.T.F., Home and School, Holland College, the University of Prince Edward Island and Adult and Continuing Education. Meetings were also held with senior high school principals, coordinators, consultants and other staff members of the Department of Education as well as representatives from other government departments and with members of the Senior High School Standing Committee.

Information sessions for teachers were held at the P.E.I.T.F. Annual Convention as well as on the November Professional Development Day. Meetings were held with each of the staffs of the English language senior high schools as well as a combined meeting, open to both staff and the public, at each of the French language senior high schools.

Public information meetings were held in the evenings at each of the ten English language senior high schools in the province.

Two Youth Forums with three student representatives from each senior high school as well as representatives from youth age eighteen to twenty five were held (one in Summerside and one in Charlottetown). Guidance counselors from each senior high school also took part in the Youth Forums.

Additional meetings were held with representatives of the Greater Summerside Area Chamber of Commerce, the Charlottetown Area Chamber of Commerce as well as with Provincial Youth Center educators, the Tremploy educators group, P.E.I.T.F. Education Committee, the Western School Board, principals and senior administrators of the Western School Board, the Transitions Committee of the Eastern School District, the Intermediate Standing Committee of the Department of Education and the Holland College/Continuing Education Directors and Coordinators group.

Various press releases, media stories and radio interviews as well as numerous phone calls, e-mails and letters all served to heighten awareness of this undertaking. Copies of the report were circulated throughout the province and to various colleagues in education across the country.

Response forms were distributed at the public and other meetings and a number were

completed and returned giving valuable input to our Advisory Committee.

An Advisory Committee of twenty three members was formed with representatives from each of the senior high schools (members of the Senior High School Standing Committee) as well as from the various partners in education. Members of this committee attended each of the four public input meetings held across the province to hear the presentations which were made.

The Advisory Committee has held a series of full day meetings and each member has had the opportunity to review all of the written responses (both formal submissions and individual response forms) and to provide input on each of the original eighteen recommendations as well other aspects of the Transitions Program Proposal. The notes, responses, and suggestions which follow in this report are a direct result of these deliberations. Although the Advisory Committee is a large group, it functions in an efficient manner with each member committed to doing what is best for the students and the education system in the province.

General Observations

The input and feedback received through the processes noted above, as well as input from members of the Advisory Committee, addressed each of the eighteen recommendations contained in the original report. In addition, a number of general observations, guidelines and cautions were clearly articulated which must be highlighted before moving to the specific recommendations. These issues are noted below:

- The worlds of work, recreation and citizenship are all changing quickly and dramatically. The challenges faced by our high school graduates are numerous. The interpersonal and academic skills which graduates require seem to be ever increasing. There is agreement that there is need for significant changes in the programs, courses and education offered at the present general and practical levels in our senior high schools.

- Many of the respondents suggested that there is a need to focus on what is happening in the classroom, rather than using all our energy debating how these modules/courses be packaged. The delivery system needs to be addressed as a separate issue as it impacts on the entire senior high school community. A focus on personal relationships in the classroom as well as instructional, motivational and assessment strategies and techniques are key elements in program revision.

- Almost every response noted or highlighted the need for additional human and financial resources for this initiative if it is to be meaningful, effective and sustainable in the long term. In addition to the development of new courses and the provision of resource materials, smaller class size, more access to computer technology, expanded teacher in-service, the need for adequate facilities and the need for increased support services were recurring themes.

- Changes implemented must be rooted in our provincial Philosophy of Education and there must be a clear statement of the purpose and mandate for public school education in the province keeping in mind that the mandate of the entry to grade 12 public school system is not to train students for specific workplace jobs. This mandate should be kept in mind when considering the goals of this and other Department of Education initiatives. The goal of the Transitions initiative should be to encourage and foster an increase in the education attainment of students and to provide students with the opportunity to obtain academic, personal, social and experiential foundations that will sustain life long learning, the ability to access further training (either on the job or continuing their education) and to equip them in their role as citizens in our society.

- The target group of students for this initiative are those students who are enrolled in present practical or general level courses as well as those who are experiencing limited success in academic courses. While many of the courses that are modified or developed will be available for all students, the needs of the target group of students must be kept clearly in mind.

- If we are to help decrease social barriers within our schools there must be opportunities for all students to access certain common courses while other courses will need prerequisites.

- The terms general and practical, as presently used, carry too many negative connotations and must be replaced as new courses come on stream.

- When developing courses and programs it is important to recognize the individuality of schools and to consider such aspects as facilities, equipment, community supports and expertise of the school staffs. It is essential that schools and their staffs be involved in the development process for new courses and that they agree with the validity of such courses before they are implemented.

- This initiative must build on the many positive practices and offerings which now exist in our schools. There is a need to be able to allow some present courses such as the academic courses to proceed uninterrupted as a result of this initiative.

- Attention must be paid to the challenge of providing equity of opportunities for students in larger and smaller schools.

- The need to insure that all students have options to further their education after high school was clearly expressed. The change in entry requirements by community colleges makes it essential that both short term and long term options be examined to help students gain access to further education.

- Many submissions clearly stated "... proceed cautiously and do it right." Respondents expressed the need for a long term sustainable plan with adequate in-service for teachers and adequate resources to carry it out. In addition, the necessity of piloting and assessing all courses and other undertakings before they are considered for implementation was viewed as essential. The need to promote an effective model for change was cited as being very important.

- In conclusion, the input received from all sources was diverse, but, quite positive and encouraging. All involved had the welfare of the students of Prince Edward Island clearly in mind and this common thread made even opposite viewpoints rich sources upon which to build.

Recommendations

An attempt has been made at providing comments on and suggesting direction for each of the eighteen recommendations contained in the original Senior High School Transitions Program Proposal. The Advisory Committee has classified each of the original recommendations under the following categories:

- **accepted as stated**
- **accepted with modification**
- **table for further study**
- **not accepted**

In each instance a rationale for the classification and suggestions for dealing with possible implementation are given in point form. An action strategy is also suggested for each recommendation.

Accepted as Stated

Recommendation 9 - All students receive instruction in and have opportunities to use informational technology during their senior high school years.

Accepted as Stated

Rationale

There was consensus that this recommendation should stand.

Implementation Notes

- It was suggested that an outline delineating basic technological skills to be mastered should be developed in conjunction with this recommendation.
- The need for computer and other technology hardware and additional technical support services were frequently noted.

Action Strategy

Curriculum developers should work closely with technology consultants and their committees to develop programs for students that will provide them with appropriate technology literacy skills. The Department of Education must develop a clear process to address the manner in which adequate technology hardware can be provided and maintained to insure that this recommendation can be carried out.

Recommendation 12 - The Department of Education pursue the possibility of establishing articulation agreements with post-secondary training institutions whereby they give special recognition to certain high school courses or programs.

Accepted as Stated

Rationale

There was general agreement with this recommendation. It was indicated that the agreements should not only give recognition to certain courses, but should also facilitate direct acceptance of high school graduates who meet certain criteria into post secondary training programs.

Implementation Notes

- Partnerships should be developed among Holland College, the school boards, the

Department of Education and H.R.D.C.

- Clear definitions of entry requirements for college courses need to be developed and be made available for sharing with students.
- Program sharing with Holland College would help the students see where their present high school program could lead.
- Students will need to develop resumes, portfolios and /or skills profiles in order to support their applications for further study (see other recommendations).
- There must be partners involved in examining a "pre program upgrading strategy" to help students access post secondary programs.
- There needs to be consistent recognition of courses from all high schools.

Action Strategy

Immediately form a committee with representation from the various partners involved to begin dealing with the issues outlined.

Recommendation 18 - The Department of Education meet with the P.E.I.T.F. to discuss the possibility of having some in-service sessions or programs in areas of predetermined need carried out using an alternate schedule in order to minimize classroom disruptions during the school year.

Accepted as Stated

Rationale

There was a consensus of support for this recommendation.

Implementation Notes

- Negotiations must meet the memorandum requirements.
- In New Brunswick summer institutes are successful. Expenses are covered for teachers. Maybe such a model should be examined for P.E.I. as a means of providing professional development opportunities for teachers.
- A sub committee of P.E.I.T.F. and the Department of Education come up with suggestions or ideas on how to do this.

Action Strategy

A Department of Education and P.E.I.T.F. committee be formed to begin discussions and work in this area as soon as possible. Representation from U.P.E.I. and other partners in education may need to be added to this committee.

Accepted with Modification

Recommendation 2 - The grade 10 year be considered a transition year before decisions are finalized on career paths to be followed. An integrated or other flexible model be adopted to allow for this to happen.

Accepted with Modification

Rationale

This recommendation generated a lot of discussion which was based on a variety of interpretations of the term "transition year". The term itself seemed to carry considerable baggage and was often equated with the New Brunswick model of a foundation year. This label is probably best dropped with the needed recommendations targeted to the Grade 10 year.

The term "career paths" should be changed to "educational paths".

The thrust of this recommendation should be that during the Grade 10 year a school will adopt an integrated or flexible model to allow for maximum educational path choices by the end of the grade 10 year. This could be anywhere from a totally integrated model to a streamed model that allows for integration in certain subject areas.

Implementation Notes

- Students need opportunities to experience success.
- Flexibility needs to remain to allow schools to follow either an integrated or a streamed model in grade 10.
- In an integrated or streamed model any student who successfully completes grade 10 should be able to choose courses appropriate to his/her ability in the following year.
- Integration of students could be encouraged by having certain courses available to all students.
- The grade 10 year needs to be reviewed to look at such topics as:
    - required courses to be taken
    - the possibility of offering some courses on a year long basis; e.g. mathematics and language arts
    - the encouragement of academic excellence
    - delay streaming as long as possible.

Reworded Recommendation # 2
Schools will have in place a flexible program that allows students to maximize their educational path choices by the end of the grade 10 year. This could range from a totally integrated approach to a streamed approach of program delivery that would allow students to:

- make changes in education path choices
- access integrated programs in some areas of study
- be able to graduate from senior high school in three years regardless of courses taken during the grade 10 year.

Action Strategy

The Department of Education encourage and support schools to voluntarily pilot different structures that reflect the ideas noted above. Opportunities should be provided so that best practices can be shared among schools. The Department of Education should use the evaluation of these pilots to inform policy and program development.

Recommendation 3 - Life Skills modules be developed and be required to be taken at the grade 10 level.

Accepted with Modification

Rationale

There was widespread agreement that life skill modules and offerings are valuable and needed. The challenge will be to clarify the purpose and content areas to be addressed by such offerings. Several contributors noted the following points:

- The term life skills must be both defined and delineated.
- The course or modules should not be mandatory specifically at the grade 10 level.
- Integration of life skills into other subject areas needs to be considered.

Implementation Notes

- The first step is to determine what life skills need to be offered to high school students and then determine how to best deliver these skills.
- Modules or courses developed should be designed so that they can vary from school to school depending on student needs in different locations.
- The offerings should be available for all students, but should be geared in response to the needs of the target group.
- The offerings should be developed by a committee, piloted, reworked and only then be presented for implementation.
- The present course offerings in areas such as Physical Education, Family Life or others should not be destroyed.
- Courses being considered should reflect the Essential Graduation Learning Outcomes

which have been adopted by the province.

Reworded Recommendation # 3
Life skills courses should be reviewed and where needed new courses/modules be developed which would be open and accessible to all students.

Action Strategy

- Establish a committee/work group to address the issues and tasks outlined above.
- Clearly define what life skills are and determine which ones need to be taught.
- Develop pilot courses in areas where needs have been identified and assess these for possible implementation.

Recommendation 5 - School to Work/Life Transition modules be established and all students considering moving directly into the workforce from high school be required to take it.

Accepted with Modification

Rationale

There was overall agreement that such modules or courses are needed. Many felt that such offerings should be available for all students, but, should be designed for those intending to move into the workforce in the near future.

The "required" part of the recommendation needs to be changed as it is probably not enforceable.

Implementation Notes

- These offerings should be designed with input from people from industry, Cooperative Work Studies teachers and others with related expertise.
- They should be available to students in grades 11 or 12.
- An outcomes based approach is recommended for structure and assessment.

Reworded Recommendation # 5
School to Work/Life Transition modules or course(s) should be developed by the Department of Education with the recommendation that such courses be taken by all students planning to enter the workforce directly from high school.

Action Strategy

- Establish a curriculum development committee to address the issues and tasks outlined above.
- Clearly define what school to work/life transition skills are and then determine which ones need to be taught.
- Develop pilot courses in areas where needs have been identified, and assess these courses for possible implementation.

Recommendation 6 - All students planning to enter the workforce directly from high school have the opportunity to complete a personal employability skills profile, portfolio and resume. These could be accomplished as one of the School to Work/Life Transition modules.

Accepted with Modification

Rationale

There was general support for this recommendation, however, some felt that some of the essential inputs needed to be started much earlier (e.g. intermediate school).

It was noted that the last sentence of this recommendation should be dropped as it is part of the implementation method.

Implementation Notes

- It was noted that although this recommendation is directed toward the target group it should be available to all students.
- The recommendation could be carried out in conjunction with #5.

Reworded Recommendation #6
Students, especially those planning to enter the workforce directly from high school, have the opportunity to complete a personal employability skills profile, portfolio and resume during their high school years.

Action Strategy

- The committee formed to address Recommendation #5 should also deal with the items outlined in this recommendation.
- Sample structures and models developed by the committee should be made available for schools to pilot.

Recommendation 8 - Schools be encouraged and supported in bringing community resource

people into the classrooms and school in order to help students gain insight into the current workings of the local society, observe role models and help establish networking contacts with the community at large.

Accepted with Modification

Rationale

There was widespread support for this recommendation. It was noted that a change in the wording to say "... continuing" would be more appropriate as this is happening at present.

Implementation Notes

- Names of resource people who would be available to visit schools in the province along with an outline of their areas of expertise could be made available.
- Both present and retired participants from the work force should be considered.
- Resource people could be listed as part of the resources for courses that are being developed under this initiative.
- It was suggested that each school could generate a list of needs specific to that school and use this list to seek volunteers from the community (e.g. seniors and others with specific skills) to assist in addressing these needs.

Reworded Recommendation #8
Schools be encouraged and supported in continuing to bring community resource people into the classrooms and school in order to help students gain insight into the current workings of the local society, observe role models and help establish contacts with various sectors from the community at large.

Action Strategy

- Curriculum development committees insure that the intent of this recommendation be incorporated into the strategies and resources developed for high school courses.
- The Department of Education ensure that a provincial list be developed and distributed.

Recommendation 10 - Existing resource centres in senior high schools be upgraded by adding more resources and/or establishing links with other resource facilities that support school to work/life transitions.

Accepted with Modification

Rationale

There was overall agreement with this recommendation. It was suggested that the wording could read "... that support students accessing educational/career path options."

Implementation Notes

- Suggestions to help implement this recommendation included:
  - using web based resources, CD ROMS and networks wherever possible
  - tapping into the shared resources available via the library network
  - upgrading resources in this area
  - ensuring that each senior high school has a minimum of one full time librarian.

Reworded Recommendation #10
Existing resource centres in senior high schools be upgraded by insuring there is a minimum of one full time librarian in each school, adding more resources which support school to work/life transitions, and establishing links with other resource facilities which support students who wish to access information on education/career path options.

Action Strategy

- Consult with teacher librarians and guidance /career counsellors to establish a list of needs.
- Seek federal funding sources and other supports to help carry out the linkages and tasks noted above.

Recommendation 13 - That a consultant or consultants be employed by the Department of Education with expertise in the areas of school to work transitions and curriculum development to work with existing consultants and teachers in the development of non-university preparatory modules in mathematics, English, science and social studies as well as lead in the development of life skills and school to work transition modules.

Accepted with Modification

Rationale

There are two separate recommendations here - one on the need for consultants and one on the need for new programs. Would they be clearer if separated?

There was widespread overall agreement on the need to focus on course development in the areas noted above.

It was noted that expertise may exist with present Department of Education Consultants. Where this is the case could these people be freed from some other duties so that they may be

able to carry out some of the needed functions? The crucial thing is to highlight the need for developing suitable course offerings for our present general and practical level students.

Implementation Notes

- Courses developed must have a definite focus, be action oriented and lead to future opportunities.
- A consultant with teacher representation from senior high schools, is needed on each committee developing these courses.
- There must be consultations with the next educational level to know the post secondary requirements. Consideration must be given to the H.R.D.C. Essential Skills Profiles which identifies academic and other skills needed for entry into various post secondary training programs.
- The consultant(s) must be aware of what is happening at the high schools, post secondary institutions and in the world of work.
- There must be a higher level of expectations for students enrolled in these courses.
- Maybe we can build on modules that already exist as "College Prep" at Holland College or other institutions.
- This will be an expensive recommendation to carry out.

Reworded Recommendations #13A
That appropriate courses or modules be developed for the target group of students in the areas of mathematics, language arts, science and social studies .

Reworded Recommendations #13B
A consultant or consultants be acquired, if and where necessary, with expertise in curriculum development and in-servicing of teachers in order to help carry out the course development and in-servicing recommended in this report.

Action Strategy

- Have the task assigned to a consultant(s) by the end of the present school year.
- Start work on developing curriculum in these areas as soon as possible with the goal of having some courses or modules ready to pilot by second semester of next year.

Recommendation 14 - A consultant be employed and given the responsibility to coordinate and review existing offerings and spearhead the development of new Apprenticeship, C.E.C., and C.T.S. offerings as well as review and develop guidelines and supports for all work related programs. This consultant will work closely with the schools and for the first three years will be assigned solely to senior high schools.

Accepted with Modification

Rationale

The concept that courses in the areas noted above need to be reviewed and where applicable standardized, met with approval. It was noted that the wording of the recommendation puts too much emphasis on the "how to" or process rather than on the area of what needs to be done.

Implementation Ideas

- There must be a review and assessment of what offerings we have in our schools now.
- There must be an effort made towards standardizing some of these courses across the province.
- There is a need to build on the strengths of present offerings.
- Courses should provide relevant links between academic studies and their practical applications.
- Supports are needed to both develop further "applied" courses and to make some of those presently offered available in more schools.
- Although these courses need to be available for all students, we need to keep the needs of the target group of this initiative in mind when reviewing and developing such courses.

Reworded Recommendation #14
A review and assessment of existing course offerings in the areas of Career Exploration, Apprenticeship, Career Technology Studies and other related areas take place. The need for new course offerings or the modification of existing course offerings be assessed and the development of expanded offerings be undertaken where needed. Guidelines should be reviewed and altered where needed in order to support all work related programs which occur off site.

Action Strategy

- Begin a review of the items noted above as soon as possible and establish a curriculum committee in this area to advise and help develop needed curriculum.
- Develop a framework under which all courses in the categories noted above can be organized and grouped.

Recommendation 15 - School to Work Labor Market Outreach Workers be employed to serve the needs of non-university bound students by providing up to date labour market information for students, serve as advocates for these students within the school community, provide individual career information and put together data to track the career routes taken by senior high school graduates.

Accepted with Modification

Rationale

The positions need to be full time and accessible for all students, not just the non-university bound students.

There was support for this recommendation, but consideration must be given to the comments noted below

Implementation Notes

- These positions do not replace or lessen the need for trained guidance counsellors in each school.
- Care must be taken to ensure that these positions are sustainable in the long term.
- The tracking of students who have graduated is a good idea.

Reworded Recommendation #15
School to Work Labor Market Outreach Workers should be employed to support the work of guidance counsellors in serving the needs of students by providing up to date labour market information for students, serving as advocates for students within the school community, providing individual career information and putting together data to track the career routes taken by senior high school graduates.

Action Strategy

- Seek funding for these full time positions from the Federal Government as well as a long term plan to sustain the positions.
- Develop concise role descriptions and continuous evaluation strategies for these positions.

Recommendation 16 - In-servicing be provided on effective teaching and evaluation strategies for teachers of non-university preparatory modules or courses and a contact teacher or department head be designated in each school to help coordinate in-service offerings and to serve as a mentor for teachers teaching these courses for the first time. Where possible, a high priority be placed on insuring that teachers be assigned to teach non-university preparatory modules or courses on a long term basis.

Accepted with Modification

Rationale

Although this recommendation contains several parts, the main thrust is on providing in-servicing on effective teaching and evaluation strategies. This was seen by most to be a very high priority and something that is needed. The establishment of a contact teacher or department head in each school to help coordinate in-service was also deemed to be acceptable.

The references to " non-university " teachers or modules should be replaced with a more positive term.

Implementation Notes

- The support and coordination of the in-servicing will be a large job.
- The department head position should be a new one because of the scope of this task.
- Incentives should be provided for teachers to commit to the "new program"; e.g. smaller class size, strong curriculum and in-service.

Reworded Recommendation #16
In-servicing be provided on effective teaching and evaluation strategies for teachers of modules or courses related to this initiative. A contact teacher or department head be designated in each school to help coordinate in-service offerings and to serve as a mentor for teachers teaching these courses. Where possible, a high priority be placed on insuring that teachers be assigned to teach these modules or courses on a long-term basis.

Action Strategy

- Develop a plan to identify the areas of inservice that are needed and the best delivery and implementation model to use to maximize the effectiveness of in-service for teachers.
- Create a new department head position in each senior high school to help create, coordinate and sustain the initiatives noted above.

Table for Further Study

Note: The three recommendations included under this category require further study in that they either impact on the entire school system, need to be clarified and expanded, or have significant unanswered questions about how they could be carried out.

Recommendation 1 - The scheduling and program design of senior high school courses allow for the development and delivery of 20 to 30 hour course modules.

Table for further Study

Rationale

The recommendation itself has to be clarified; as stated, it raises a lot of speculation and questions and makes support or rejection of the concept very hypothetical.

It has implications for all parts of the senior high school system and impacts on these other levels must be examined as a needed next step.

The concept of providing scheduling flexibility received support; but, all opinions were given with questions, qualifications, and assumptions.

Any scheduling design must allow for the uninterrupted continuation of some existing course offerings.

It was deemed necessary to define program needs first and then develop a delivery system that will facilitate these needs.

Implementation Notes

- This recommendation requires extensive research, planning and piloting.
- We must assume that not all courses will be modules. The recommendation is to provide flexibility where it is needed.
- Course designation numbers will have to be changed if this recommendation is adopted.
- Course content should be determined before deciding on course length.
- Present minimum time requirements in the core areas must not be decreased.
- Will the recommendation be implemented so that all schools will be the same, or, will it allow the flexibility for each school to be unique, based on its own needs ?
- When developing the implementation plan, keep in mind the importance of the student and teacher relationship.
- Administration of timetables may be more difficult with this recommendation.
- Related issues such as length of classes, teacher preparation time and post secondary

acceptance of credits of different length must all be addressed in dealing with this recommendation.

- A very clear definition of the term module must be given.

Action Strategy

Request that the Directors of Programs and Services establish a representative working committee to review the issues noted above and to make recommendations to administrators, teachers and other partners for consideration regarding scheduling and organizational delivery systems. (It should be noted that most of the initiatives of the Transitions report can proceed while this recommendation is being studied.)

Recommendation 7 - Up to the equivalent of two credits be granted to students for learning done outside of a school credit program in accordance with provincially developed guidelines.

Table for Further Study

Rationale

There was some support for the intent of this recommendation, but major concerns over how it could be implemented. For example very strict guidelines would limit the availability of these credits for students in the target group. Very open guidelines would make the credits almost become automatic and thus meaningless.

The question of who would control or evaluate the course was raised several times.

Implementation Notes

- Presentations by individuals and groups pointed out the potential of the concept, but a lot of work needs to be done to steer the concept into a workable model.
- Some jurisdictions offer 1 credit for such studies while others offer special recognition through a special certificate or similar non-credit acknowledgment.

Action Strategy

A work group be established to look at the issues noted in this recommendation as well as those contained in recommendation #17 and suggest specific direction and/or proposals to the Senior High School Standing Committee for its consideration.

Recommendation 17 - That opportunities be made available for teachers of non-university bound students to experience the modern workplace through employee exchanges, job - shadowing or similar opportunities.

Table for Further Study

Rationale

Remove the term "employee exchanges" from the recommendation as it is misleading and implies that teachers trade jobs with people from the community. Job shadowing covers the idea being presented here. Other comments included:

- Many of the logistics need to be workout.
- Most sources of input felt that this recommendation was not a high priority at this time.
- Should this recommendation target or be open to all teachers ?

Implementation Notes

- Job shadowing would be a valuable experience for teachers but the cost and disruption may offset the benefits and create different or additional problems.
- Maybe short duration experiences could be examined (e.g. day visits to related work sites).

Action Strategy

See note under recommendation #7 above.

Not Accepted

The two recommendations noted below were either not considered to be workable as stated (recommendation #4) or was not considered to be that useful to pursue at this time.

Recommendation 4 - Each student enrolled in a non-university program of studies be required to complete the equivalent of two credits of work experience, voluntary community service or related studies prior to graduation.

Not Accepted

Rationale

There was a general consensus from both educators and the business community that this recommendation as worded is not workable. This conclusion came about because the partners in education are finding it difficult now in many areas to get work placements for students enrolled in the present Cooperative Education Program. If all students noted in the recommendation were required to complete two full credits in addition to academic level students taking Cooperative Education, the job placements and staff needed would not be available.

Most agreed that the concept is good in theory, but restrictive in practice. Maybe a shorter time on a work site or a tie-in with other courses or modules could be examined.

It was also noted that the term voluntary is not appropriate for a "requirement".

Implementation Notes

- Students should be encouraged to access Cooperative Work Studies courses where they are available.
- Work experience components or connections should be integrated into other courses where appropriate.
- The rejection of this recommendation should not be seen as undervaluing the importance of work experience or experiential learning for students in the target group.

Action Strategy

Committees and groups working on curriculum and programs for the target group of students keep the need to provide experiential learning for these students clearly in mind and seek as many avenues as possible to provide for these needs.

Recommendation 11 - Senior high schools develop a process to ensure that departing students are apprised of training and employment opportunities and receive a high school exit certificate outlining their high school completions up to the time of their departure.

Not Accepted

Rationale

There was not a general agreement with this recommendation. The intent and the actual product (i.e exit certificate) need clarification.

It was felt that such a certificate could possibly be worked into a transcript or be part of a student's portfolio as suggested under recommendation #6.

It was noted that this recommendation would increase demands on counsellors and may or may not be of much benefit to students.

Possibly a strong mentoring or teacher advisor system would be a more effective model

Reference letters are now available for students who need them.

Implementation Notes

- Consultation with school administrators is needed if this proposal is pursued.

Action Strategy

Those working on meeting the career information needs of students under this initiative should also consider information which needs to be made available to students who have to leave school prior to having graduated.

Additional Observations on the Original Recommendations

After examining the original recommendations the Advisory Committee noted that:

- The term "non-university bound" and any other negatively worded descriptors for these students should be avoided in all future reports and course descriptions.

- The terms general and practical be phased out of use as senior high school program descriptors as replacement courses are developed. The renaming of the new courses should happen in concert with their development so that there is a new program to associate with the new name.

New Recommendations

The Advisory Committee felt that the following additional recommendations need to be considered in implementing this initiative.

Recommendation A1
The student-teacher ratio be lowered and class sizes reduced where necessary to help address the needs outlined in this initiative.

Rationale

Input received frequently referred to the need for smaller classes, more hands on experiences, and an increased emphasis on interpersonal skills for students in the target group. All of these require that more teachers be available to work with these students.

In addition, several who made submissions noted the importance of early intervention in the school system in order to help address as many academic and other challenges as possible well before students reach high school.

Implementation Notes

- Careful documentation of the effectiveness of smaller class size in pilot programs be recorded along with other factors that help lead to program effectiveness.
- Possibly some of the new courses being developed could be classified under the 14-1 ratio that now exists for certain course offerings.

Action Strategy

Clearly define and substantiate the need for extra staff in order to effectively deliver the programs developed under this initiative.

Make the needs, rationale and options available known to the proper administrators within the Department of Education and make a case for accepting options that will fulfill the defined needs.

Recommendation A2
A framework model be created to help guide the development of new course offerings noted in this proposal. Such a framework should make provision to insure that instructional strategies, motivational suggestions, assessment tools, teacher in-service as well as adequate and appropriate resources are available for each new course or module. Programs developed should be designed to be flexible enough to fit into a variety of school schedules and situations.

Rationale

If such a framework is developed it would not be necessary to duplicate any generic material for each module or course. For example, instructional strategies, motivational techniques, assessment tools and other common sections would not need to be designed for each module or course being developed. They could just be modified to suit the defined outcomes for each course.

Implementation Notes

- The development of a check list or template would be very helpful in developing new courses or modules.
- Certain course development sections such as instructional strategies, assessment strategies and other similar areas could, in large measure, be shared among courses.

Action Strategy

Design a template in concert with the development of the first pilot course and build on, and refine it in subsequent pilot course descriptions.

Recommendation A3
A mentoring program should be explored, and a prototype developed, whereby each student in senior high school would have one teacher advisor who would be his/her advisor during the three years in high school.

Rationale

One of the concerns expressed by many contributors was that sometimes students and their individual situations or concerns get lost in our present high school structure. A situation in which each student has an adult mentor for his/her three years in senior high school may be one way of addressing this concern. In addition such a model would give parents an ongoing contact person in the school whom they know and could easily contact.

Implementation Notes

- Research into working models as well as staff in-service and " buy in " are essential ingredients for such a program to be successful.
- Mentors must be provided with a program format to follow in order to sustain the initiative over the long term.

Action Strategy

Examine working models used in other jurisdictions and have a senior high school volunteer to pilot such a program and share its findings with others.

Recommendation A4
In addition to the number of guidance counselors now employed in our senior high schools, each school have access to a counselor who specializes in career options in order to assist all students with their career plans.

Rationale

There is a need to insure that students and their parents are made aware of the impact that course selections have on their future career options. It is very important that this be started at the beginning of senior high school. Moreover, in an increasingly complex society it is more difficult for students to become aware of all available career options, so the advice and support of a career counselor are needed.

Implementation Notes

- There is a need for the additional counselors to be available to visit with students at the intermediate school level in order assist students at that level with their long term educational planning.

Action Strategy

Consult with guidance counselors to define areas of need that require additional counselors.

Make these needs known and substantiate their importance to school board and Department of Education officials.

Recommendation A5
That Holland College, U.P.E.I. and other post secondary institutions be requested to have in place a sustainable communication strategy which will provide senior high schools with information such as specific entry skills and other requirements for entry to specific programs, the costs involved and the competition expected for high school graduates to gain admission to any given program.

Rationale

At present there is a lack of specific information readily available to students and their parents about entry requirements for specific post secondary programs.

Students are often not aware of opportunities that may be available to them.

Implementation Notes

- Guidance counselors and others expressed frustration with the sometimes slow or even lack of flow of information between some post secondary institutions and senior high schools.
- Up-to-date information is essential in allowing students to weigh their future educational options.

Action Strategy

Meet with post secondary institutions and discuss, share, and help develop a long term communication strategy between those institutions and the senior high schools.

Encourage the holding of annual fall information meetings between senior high school guidance counselors and provincial post secondary institutions.

Recommendation A6 That students at all senior high schools be given opportunities to access programs that are developed under this "Transitions" initiative so that small schools not be at a disadvantage.

Rationale

It was felt that programs being developed should be designed in a manner flexible enough that they could be offered at any sized high school and under different scheduling or structural formats.

Implementation Notes

- While it is realized that there are certain advantages and disadvantages at small and large schools it was felt that programs developed under this initiative need to be made available to students across the province in an equitable manner. This does not mean that all courses be offered in all schools, but it does mean that appropriate courses be available for each school.

Action Strategy

Ensure that programs and other undertakings developed under this initiative be piloted in schools of different configurations and sizes.

Recommendation A7
Close liaison between grade 9 and grade 10 teachers, counselors, and administrators be promoted and encouraged so that all involved have a clearer understanding of the teaching strategies, required student skills and knowledge, general expectations and other requirements of students at each of these grade levels.

Rationale

The transition from intermediate to senior high school was identified as an area of concern by parents, students and educators. In senior high schools that have grade 9 communication appears to be easier than at schools where this is not the case. In all cases the move into grade 10 needs to be as smooth as possible for all students, and this is especially true for the students in the target group.

Implementation Notes

- In some courses there seems to be a large change in course content, approaches and methodology used between grades 9 and 10.
- Communication among schools was cited as a problem in some instances.

Action Strategy

The Department of Education needs to insure that curriculum flows smoothly between grades 9 and 10.

All partners in education should be encouraged to find ways to assist students in their move from grade 9 to grade 10 so that learning is not disrupted.

Priorities

The total number of recommendations discussed above will take a lot of time, resources, consultation, piloting and collaboration among the various parties concerned if they are to be properly implemented. Obviously, it would be most difficult, if not impossible, to try to carry out all of the recommendations at once. Therefore, the Advisory Committee went through a priority setting exercise on the original eighteen recommendations. The results are indicative of what the Advisory Committee feels are the highest priorities in terms of present needs.

The development of new programs to replace current general and practical level courses in the areas cited in recommendations #13 and #14 was a high priority. Additional links and other resources that support school to work/life transitions in our resource centers (recommendation #10) and the in-servicing outlined in recommendation #16 were next on the list. The pursuit of articulation agreements with Holland College and other post secondary institutions was given a high priority as was the need to develop life skills courses (recommendations 12 and 3).

Work on the Grade 10 year (recommendation #2) and the development of school to work/life transition courses or modules (recommendation #5) were rated next followed by recommendation 9 (the provision for instruction in and opportunities to use informational technology) and recommendations 18 and 15 (in-service discussions with P.E.I.T.F. and the provision of School to Work Labor Market Outreach Workers).

The other recommendations ranked lower on the list of what to do first. However, it should be noted that the rankings should not be viewed as an absolute order of priority as some of the lower rated recommendations such as #1 may be quite important in helping facilitate the delivery of the curriculum outlined in the recommendations given higher priority.

The new recommendations added by the Advisory Committee are for the most part recommendations that the Committee felt were needed in order to ensure the success and sustainability of the Transitions initiative. Consequently, they need to be worked on in concert with each of the undertakings noted above.

Committee Members

Willard Moase - Chair - Department of Education
Diane Griner - Data Manager - Department of Education
George Aitken - Kensington Intermediate Senior High School
Gabriel Arsenault - La Commission Scolaire De Langue Francaise
Gary Burke - Kensington Intermediate Senior High School
Pauline Coady - Department of Education
Kirk Cutcliffe - Colonel Gray Senior High School
Lyman Douglas - Montague Regional High School
Myles Ellis - Western School Board
Eric Gallant - Three Oaks Senior High School
Melina Gallant - Department of Education
Donna Gill - Charlottetown Rural High School
Ralph Grant - P.E.I. Teachers' Federation
Shirley Jay - P.E.I. Home and School Federation
Ken McAleer - Eastern School Board
Brian MacMillan - Holland College
Allan MacRae - Westisle Composite High School
Joanne McCabe - Department of Education
Eugene Murphy - Bluefield Senior High School
Craig Norton - Adult and Continuing Education (Apprenticeship)
Ken Peters - Souris Regional High School
Andy Robb - University of Prince Edward Island
Jonathan Russell - Kinkora High School
Elaine Somerville - Department of Education
Lou Walsh - Morell Regional High School